

Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: **DESIGN IN TECHNICAL REHEARSALS**

Size of student group: **8 STUDENTS**

Observer: **LEILA GHOURI**

Observee: **FAUST PENEYRA**

Part One | Observee to complete in brief and send to observer prior to the observation or review:

What is the context of this session/artefact within the curriculum?

Design in Technical Rehearsals as part of the B.A. Performance Design (PDP) Final Production "Live at CSM!"

How long have you been working with this group and in what capacity?

I have been working with these students for 1 year and 2 months across 2 Academic Years from 2022-2024.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

Visual literacy

Spatial awareness for staging performances/theatre

Design awareness and knowledge

Stage design possibilities

Lighting design

Technical direction and management

Aesthetic judgement

Adapting to digital technologies

Health & safety

What are the anticipated outputs (anything students will make/do)?

Complete the Lighting Rigging plans, plot the lighting of all 7 performances and complete Risk Assessment forms to be submitted to CSM Events and Performance Technical Coordinator.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

Making sure everyone is practicing Health and Safety as we are dealing with heavy lighting equipment and electricity.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

Students were briefed of the scheduled workshop and as part of the PGCert of the Obeservee.

What would you particularly like feedback on?

Effectivity of lecture and activities.

How will feedback be exchanged?

Quick chat through tutorials and through this Observation Form.

Part Two

Observer to note down observations, suggestions, and questions:

Faust invited me to his workshop at 4pm instead of 3pm (start time) which is why I was able to attend the last 15 minutes. Faust and I then had a debrief of how he worked whilst showing me the slides.

The Setup of Faust's workshop on Design in Technical rehearsal's was as follows:

Though Faust is a Specialist Technician he used theory which gave good context for the practical and technical elements of his workshop. Faust took the students on a journey, guiding them as an audience watching a performance.

Faust's initial point was that the birth of storytelling around the fire was akin to the birth of theatre- I think this would have really captured the student's imagination and drawn them in as an ancient communal pastime.

The main point he made was about grounding theory with the aim of prepping for technical rehearsals, this included looking at the following:

Configuration of seating suggested by the architect- this is done to collate the number of audiences with the theatre space. This is where the Greek amphitheatre came into play as that was the beginning of the separation of audience from performers- and these plays used sunlight and were done during the day.

The theatre lighting then transitioned to candlelight in London

Then oil lamps

Then transitioned to gas

Faust makes it a point that as technology has evolved, so has the utilisation of technologies

by artists. He then went on to the Objectives of lighting design- mood, setting scene, composition- but lighting is not just technical it also involves setting the scene like the season and time of day, and then he moved onto techniques of programming lighting- colour, intensity, movement, distribution.

This was a wonderful way to introduce the technical aspects of lighting followed by a rundown of the types of lighting that are available in the theatres at CSM.

At this point I had arrived at the studio theatre to make the observation:

Faust was showcasing his own very impressive portfolio of theatre design and what it took to achieve the specific looks and what the context was for the works.

Faust demonstrated to students the finalised rig lighting plan on a Birds Eye view map which could then be translated onto the lighting rig setup at CSM's theatre spaces. This was also an effective way to get students to manage their expectations as there is a limit on production resources, risk assessments, and theatre safety.

I noticed that the questions and answers were interjected throughout the workshop and a good dialogue was happening between Faust and the students.

I stayed behind to see student feedback at the end of class and I could see that students were extremely interested in the technical skillsets that Faust had spoken about and the importance of it - Faust's skills are highly in demand- and the students want more of this technical teaching.

Part Three

Observee to reflect on the observer's comments and describe how they will act on the feedback exchanged:

****I am truly apologetic with the miscommunication with my Peer Observer Leila Ghouri. I am grateful to her for immediately giving time (immediately after the workshop) to reflect and discuss all the key elements that were shared with the students.***

I wanted the workshop to be truthfully generous without holding off on giving theory to the students. It has been an ongoing discussion if Specialist Technicians are meant to be sharing theory during lessons as we are just meant to support teach with the Academics and expose students to technical skills. I appreciate Leila's thoughts on the matter, as I truly believe that the conversation of the Technician's role in Higher Education must continue to define the blurred areas in teaching practice. Based on the reading of Sams, C (2016), How do art and design technicians conceive of their role in higher education?

As the students were embarking on a one-week technical rehearsals, it was necessary for me to ground the workshop that will benefit the students to their actual production. Share theories and information and then immediately connect those concepts and have a discussion (including decision making) that will contribute to their project.

I have always used my mentors and heroes works in stage design for all my workshops and lectures, to make sure I am being objective and to respect my fellow designers in terms of intellectual property. This is the first time I am using my own portfolio for a workshop, a challenge I imposed on my teaching practice based on my reading the signature pedagogies from Orr, S, & Shreeve, A (2017), Art and Design Pedagogy in Higher Education. It seemed beneficial for the students as most of the

productions discussed in the portfolio were collaborations with Aaron Porter, which is a Specialist in Lighting at Central Saint Martins and is known to the students in the workshop.

I am grateful for this positive feedback from my Peer Observer, I do know that Performance Design (PDP) students are requesting more of these design workshops from their Academics and Lecturers. As a specialist technician, I am open to sharing more of my experiences and expertise when the opportunity arises, this would be beneficial as well to my teaching practice.

References

Sams, C (2016), How do art and design technicians conceive of their role in higher education?, UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal / Vol 1 / Issue 2 pp. 62-69.

Orr, S, & Shreeve, A (2017), Art and Design Pedagogy in Higher Education : Knowledge, Values and Ambiguity in the Creative Curriculum Taylor & Francis Group, Milton. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. [1 January 2024].
